

REMARKS

Upon entry of the amendments, Claims 2-16, 18-21 will be pending in the application. Applicants provide the following comments to the Office Action of April 27, 2004.

Specification Objections

Applicants request that the specification objections be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully maintain that the language used in the specification complies with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. The phrase “in a surely held condition without trembling” is respectively asserted to be in “full, concise, and exact terms.” Applicants request the Examiner to clarify why the phrase would not be considered to include “full, concise, and exact terms.” Applicants assert that a person ordinarily skilled in the art would understand the metes and bounds of the referenced phrase.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-16, and 18-21 are rejected as obvious in view of Bacchi (US 6,281,516), Nering (6,082,951), and EP 827185. The Office Action sets forth that Bacchi discloses a lid detector 164 and pushing member 150, but fails to suggest a driving plate and a controller. The teachings of Nering and EP 827185 are relied upon in the Office Action to address the failings of Bacchi.

Applicants have carefully considered the rejection and the proposed modification of the cited prior art. Applicants respectfully assert that the cited prior art fails to teach, hint, or suggest all the claimed features of the invention. Please note that claim 1 has been canceled, therefore the rejection of claim 1 is moot and the following comments pertain to the pending independent claims.

The characteristic features of the independent claims that are not taught or suggested in the cited prior art include:

- A) claim 2 specifies a lid-detecting unit having a member to be detected whose position is changed dependently on whether the lid holding plate is holding the lid or not, and a detector that detects a position of the member to be detected;
- B) claim 7 specifies a pushing member provided on a surface of the lid holding plate on a side of the lid in such a manner that the pushing member can give a driving force to the lid in a direction of moving the lid away from the lid holding plate, against the engagement of the key element and the keyhole.
- C) claim 16 features a lid holding plate connected to the driving plate via a forcing member, and the forcing member is adapted to push the lid holding plate toward the lid, against the engagement of the key element and the keyhole.

Applicants note that Bacchi (USP 6,281,516) teaches a box presence switch (164) that indicates when a box door (30) is properly registered with the port door (76). However, the box presence switch (164) doesn't indicate whether the port door (lid holding plate) is holding the box door (lid) or not. Thus, the box presence switch is different from the lid-detecting unit of the present invention. For comparison purposes, Figure 16 of the present application shows the lid-detecting unit of the present invention has a member (38) to be detected, whose position changes dependently on whether the lid holding plate is holding the lid or not, and a detector (42) that detects a position of the member to be detected. This feature of claim 2 is not taught or suggested by Bacchi or the secondary references.

Applicants acknowledge that the latch key (150) in Bacchi may correspond to the key element (21) of the present invention. In Bacchi, however, the coil spring 192 does not give a driving force to box door (30) in a direction of moving the box door (30) away from the port door (76). In other words, Bacchi and the secondary references fail to teach or suggest an element that gives a driving force to the lid in a direction of moving the lid away from the lid holding plate, against the engagement of the key element and the keyhole as set forth in claim 7.

Furthermore, Bacchi and the secondary references fail to suggest the referenced features of claim 16. Hence, Applicants respectfully assert that the cited prior art references fail to teach an element that corresponds to the forcing member set forth in claim 16.

Applicants assert that the cited prior art references fail to teach or suggest all the features of the independent claims and therefore urge the Examiner to withdraw the rejections.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request allowance of the application. If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this response, such as fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300. Any overpayment can be credited to Deposit Account No. 02-4300.

Date: July 27, 2004

Signature:

Respectfully submitted,

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* Practice is limited to matters and proceeding before federal courts and agencies.